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Course of Development of Sino-Russian Summit Diplomacy

During the reign of the third generation of central collective leadership with Jiang Zemin as the core, the mechanism of mutual visits between presidents of China and Russia was established, which promoted the continuous development of Sino-Russian relations. The fourth generation of leadership with Hu Jintao as the core consolidated and improved Sino-Russian summit diplomacy with both formal visits and informal meetings. The fifth generation of leadership with Xi Jinping as the core have made visits between China and Russia more frequent. The two countries closely cooperate and support each other in major international affairs. Sino-Russian summit diplomacy has been developing and maturing in practice.

Keywords: Sino-Russian summit diplomacy; Jiang Zemin; Hu Jintao; Xi Jinping; course of development.

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Развитие китайско-российской дипломатии на высшем уровне

В период правления третьего поколения центрального руководства во главе с Цзян Цзэмином был создан механизм взаимных визитов президентов Китая и России, который способствовал непрерывному развитию китайско-российских отношений. Четвертое поколение руководства во главе с Ху Цзиньтао обеспечило

консолидацию и улучшение китайско-российской дипломатии на высшем уровне с системой официальных визитов и неофициальных встреч. Пятое поколение руководства, возглавляемое Си Цзиньпином, сделало визиты между Китаем и Россией более частыми. Две страны тесно сотрудничают и поддерживают друг друга в важных международных делах. Китайско-российская дипломатия на высшем уровне постоянно развивается и достигает зрелости в своей практической реализации.

Ключевые слова: китайско-российская дипломатия на высшем уровне; Цзян Цзэминь; Ху Цзиньтао; Си Цзиньпин; курс развития.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, China-Russian relations gradually turned for the better and continued to develop and upgrade. In this process, summit diplomacy between the two countries played an important role. Summit diplomacy refers to the diplomatic approach in which leaders actually control the highest decision-making power of a country, usually heads of state or government heads, directly participate in and deal with foreign affairs through a variety of means [1]. It can solve problems that are difficult to solve with general diplomatic means, resolve international conflicts and disputes, and strongly promote the development of international relations. This article, with the reign of Jiang Zemin, Hu Jintao and Xi Jinping as the timeline, combs and summarizes the development process of Sino-Russian summit diplomacy.

Establishment and Development of Sino-Russian Summit Diplomacy

During the reign of the third generation of leadership with Jiang Zemin as the core, the mechanism of mutual visits between presidents of China and Russia was established, which promoted the constant development of Sino-Russian relations.

The fall of the Soviet Union in 1991 brought adverse effects to its relationship with China to a certain degree, so on December 27 of the same year, Li Lanqing visited Russia. After consultation, the two sides agreed to took two *Sino-Soviet Joint Communiqués* signed before the visit as guiding principles for the development of Sino-Russian relations [2, p. 383], which laid foundations for the bilateral relations. From December 17–19, 1992, Russian President Boris Yeltsin visited Beijing. On December 18,

Chinese President Jiang Zemin met Yeltsin at the Diaoyutai State Guest-house. The two heads of state spoke highly of the significant impact on the development of bilateral relations to be brought by the meeting. Jiang Zemin pointed out that “The first high-level meeting between China and Russia is of great significance to the future development of bilateral relations and will surely further promote the development of the relations. Yeltsin also mentioned that “We... are appreciative of China’s great achievements in reform and the rapid improvement of people’s living standards. We are willing to follow the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence in developing our relations, especially equality and cooperation for mutual benefit and mutual non-aggression” [3, p. 3]. After the talks, the two heads of state signed and issued *Joint Statement on the Basis of Mutual Relations between the People’s Republic of China and the Russian Federation*. They also witnessed the signing of 24 agreements, including 1993 Agreement on China-Russia Economic and Trade Cooperation, the Government Loan Agreement on China’s Supply of Goods to Russia and Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation. This visit marked the beginning of the Sino-Russian summit diplomacy and was of great significance.

On September 2, 1994, President Jiang Zemin visited Russia on invitation. On the next day, Jiang and Yeltsin held a two-hour talks in Yekaterina Hall and reach consensuses on building a new partnership for the 21st century. After the talks, the two countries signed Sino-Russian Joint Statement, which summarized Sino-Russian relations as a “constructive partnership”, namely a good-neighborly and mutually beneficial relationship based on the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence. The two countries will neither form an alliance nor target at any third country. In addition, the two sides signed *Agreement on Western Sino-Russian Border*, *Sino-Russian Economic and Trade Cooperation Agreement*, *Agreement between the Government of the People’s Republic of China and the Government of the Russian Federation on Customs Cooperation and Mutual Assistance* and so on. From April 24 to 26, 1996, President Yeltsin visited China at the invitation of President Jiang Zemin. On April 25, leaders of the two countries held talks and agreed that China-Russia relations should be defined as “equal and trustworthy strategic partnership for the

21st century”. China-Russia Joint Statement issued after the talks confirmed that China and Russia would “coordinate their stand, support each other and strengthen cooperation on global and regional issues including the establishment of a new global political and economic order and security and cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region” [3, p. 40–47]. During this visit, the two countries set up a high-level regular meeting mechanism, which is divided into three levels: one visit to China and Russia respectively between heads of state, one visit to China and Russia respectively between prime ministers, and meeting between foreign ministers of the two countries at any time. Since then, summit diplomacy between China and Russia began to be standardized and normalized.

According to this mechanism, on April 23, 1997, President Jiang Zemin paid a return visit to Russia. Heads of state of two countries signed *Sino-Russian Joint Statement on World Multi-polarization and Establishment of New International Order*, which made a comprehensive and detailed elaboration of strategic cooperative partnership between China and Russia. On November 9–11, 1997, President Yeltsin visited Beijing for the third time. The two heads of state, through talks, solved the demarcation of about 4,200 miles of borders between the two countries, and signed a series of agreements on energy cooperation, financial businesses, animal protection and mineral development. On November 22, 1998, Jiang Zemin visited Russia and held talks with Yeltsin. The two leaders exchanged views on issues of common concern, such as Taiwan issue and Sino-Russian border issue. On December 9, 1999, Boris Yeltsin visited China for the fourth time. Leaders of the two countries exchanged in-depth views and reached broad consensus on world peace, Chechnya issue and Taiwan issue.

On December 31, 1999, Yeltsin announced his resignation. On May 7, 2000, Putin officially inaugurated as president of Russia. Compared with Yeltsin, Putin pursued a more pragmatic “East-West balance” foreign policy and paid more attention to Sino-Russian relations. Summit diplomacy between the two countries enjoyed greater development. On July 17–19, 2000, in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s first visit to China, two heads of state fully exchanged views on a series of major issues, covering Sino-Russian relations, anti-terrorism cooperation, the Taiwan issue,

military cooperation and civil exchanges. In June, 2001, Putin visited China again and attended the summit meeting of SCO member countries. During the meeting, he held talks with Jiang Zemin and exchanged views with Jiang on international issues of common interest. On June 15, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan issued *Declaration on the Establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization*, proclaiming the formal establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a new platform for Sino-Russian summit diplomacy. From July 15–18, 2001, President Jiang Zemin visited Russia on invitation and held talks with President Putin. Putin congratulated China on winning the right to host the 2008 Olympic Games, and Jiang Zemin thanked Russia for its support. The two sides also exchanged ideas on issues such as the delineation of Sino-Russian border and the fight against “three forces”. On the morning of July 17, Jiang Zemin delivered a speech at the Moscow University. In his speech, Jiang reviewed the development of Sino-Russian relations in the 20th century, expected Sino-Russian relations in the 21st century and gave relevant suggestions. The speech won a big round of applause from the audience.

In general, during the reign of the third generation of leadership with Jiang Zemin as the core, summit diplomacy between China and Russia was established, normalized and institutionalized. Mutual visits, exchanges and communication between heads of state of the two countries eliminated the negative impact of the fall of the Soviet Union on Sino-Russian relations, established the basis, framework and normalization mechanism of summit diplomacy between the two countries, made their bilateral relations enter normal development, and enabled the two countries to reach consensus and seek cooperation in a growing number of international relations fields.

Consolidation and Improvement of Sino-Russian Summit Diplomacy

In December, 2002, the fourth generation of leadership with Hu Jintao as the core came to power. Since then, summit diplomacy between the two countries has been consolidated and improved, featuring increased number of visits and harmonious atmosphere during talks. Summit diplomacy in forms of formal visits and informal meetings was gradually formed.

At the end of May, 2003, Hu Jintao visited Russia, which was his first foreign visit after inauguration, fully showing that China attached great importance to its relations with Russia. President Hu Jintao and President Putin exchanged in-depth views on bilateral relations and some major international and regional issues to further enhance mutual political trust. Both sides agreed that they should continue to deepen mutually beneficial cooperation and strive to raise strategic cooperative partnership between China and Russia to a new level [2, p. 482]. On May 28, Hu Jintao stressed in his speech at Moscow State Institute of International Relations that “China–Russia relations is particularly important in China’s foreign relations, and China’s new leadership attaches great importance to strengthening good-neighborly friendship and mutually beneficial cooperation” [4]. The visit attracted wide attention from Russian media. According to the report of *Trud* on May 24, China’s new president’s choosing Russia as his first stop in the 11-day Eurasian trip “is a good sign of continuing to consolidate good neighborly and friendly relations between the two countries”. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* also believes that President Hu’s visit shows that China and Russia’s policy of good-neighborly and friendly cooperation will not change [2, p. 483]. From October 14–16, 2004, Putin had a three-day state visit to China. China and Russia signed a series of agreements on border issue between the two countries, including *Supplementary Agreement on the Eastern Border of China and Russia* and *Memorandum on the Application of Existing Effective Agreement between China and Russia to Newly Delineated Border*, completely solving remaining problems concerning Sino-Russian border. During the visit, China and Russia also reached consensus on Russia’s accession to the WTO, with which President Putin was very satisfied, saying said that the visit have made a breakthrough.

In 2005, heads of state of China and Russia began to meet frequently on various occasions, which further enhanced bilateral relations. On May 9, President Hu Jintao attended the 60th anniversary of the victory of the Patriotic War in Moscow and highly praised the important role of the Soviet Union in world anti-Fascist war. From June 30 to July 3, 2005, Chinese President Hu Jintao paid a state visit to Russia, and the two heads of state signed *Sino-Russian Joint Statement on the International Order*

in the 21st Century. In September, President Hu Jintao attended United Nations Summit held in New York and met with Putin. The two sides had an in-depth exchange of views on the deepening of China-Russia strategic partnership of cooperation and major international and regional issues of common concern. In November, Hu Jintao and Putin met taking opportunity of attending the informal meeting of APEC. As a result, China and Russia established the mechanism of formal state visits and informal meetings between heads of state.

In 2006, the two heads of state held four formal and informal meetings in all. From March 21 to 22, Putin visited China, held talks with Hu Jintao and signed 15 documents including *Sino-Russian Joint Statement*. Besides, the two leaders decided to hold “the Year of Russia in China” and “the Year of China in Russia”. On June 15, Hu Jintao and Putin met at the summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. On July 17, leaders of the two countries attended Meeting of Leaders of the Group of Eight and Developing Countries held in St. Petersburg and held a meeting. On November 20, leaders of the two countries attended the 14th APEC Leaders’ Informal Meeting held in Hanoi, Vietnam, and held a meeting. In 2007, heads of China and Russia still had frequent meetings. From March 26 to 28, Hu Jintao paid a state visit to Russia, held talks with President Putin, and exchanged in-depth views on bilateral relations and major regional and international issues of common concern. In June, President Hu Jintao met with Putin while attending Meeting of Leaders of the Group of Eight and Developing Countries in Heiligendamm, Germany. On August 16, President Hu Jintao held two meetings with Putin during Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit held in capital of Kyrgyzstan Bishkek. In September, President Hu Jintao met with President Vladimir Putin during the 15th APEC Leaders’ Informal Meeting in Sydney, Australia. The combination of formal visits and informal meetings ensures that leaders of China and Russia are able to communicate in a timely and full manner on relevant issues, and enhances the personal relationship between two leaders as well.

In May, 2008, Medvedev became the president of Russia. He continued to implement positive and friendly policies of Putin concerning Sino-Russian relations. The relations between the two countries was

further developed. In 2008, meetings between the two heads of state were more frequent, with a total of one official visit and four meetings. On May 23, Medvedev paid a state visit to China. Hu Jintao warmly welcomed Medvedev and pointed out that his visiting China in the first foreign visit after presidency fully indicated that the Russian side attached great importance to the development of Sino-Russian relations. Medvedev agreed with the remarks of Hu and expressed Russia's willingness to provide necessary support for the Wenchuan earthquake [5]. After the talks, the two leaders signed *Joint Statement on Major International Issues*, which showed the unanimous position of China and Russia on international anti-terrorism and other issues. Informal meetings between heads of state of the two countries this year were as follows. On July 9, Hu Jintao met with Medvedev at Meeting of Leaders of the Group of Eight and Developing Countries in Hokkaido, Japan. Both sides exchanged views on the development of Sino-Russian relations and international and regional issues of common concern. On August 27, President Hu Jintao met Medvedev during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit held in Dushanbe. On November 15, Hu Jintao met with Medvedev at Group of Twenty Leaders Summit on Financial Markets and World Economy and exchanged views on international financial crisis with him. On November 23, Hu Jintao met with Medvedev during the 16th APEC Leaders' Informal Meeting held in Lima.

The year of 2009 was the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the Soviet Union. On June 17, Chinese President Hu Jintao paid a state visit to Russia and held talks with Medvedev. Hu stressed that as long as the two sides seize opportunities and cooperate with each other to comprehensively deepen strategic cooperation, China-Russia strategic partnership will enjoy a even better future. On the same day, Hu Jintao met with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, exchanged views on bilateral relations and major international and regional issues of common concern, and reached important consensuses. In addition, the two heads of state also took advantage of attending international meetings in London, New York and Singapore to hold talks.

In 2010, summit diplomacy between China and Russia maintained positive. President Hu Jintao attended the 65th anniversary the Patriotic

War on May 8 on invitation and had a meeting with Medvedev on the next day. The leaders of the two countries fully consulted and reached a high degree of agreement on major international issues such as Group of Twenty mechanism, joint safeguarding of regional peace and stability, strengthened cooperation in anti-terrorism, “three forces”, climate change and energy security. From September 26 to 28 in the same year, Medvedev paid a state visit to China and held talks with President Hu Jintao. The two heads of state signed a series of statements and cooperation agreements. The year of 2010 witnessed the most frequent meetings between Chinese and Russian leaders during the reign of Hu Jintao. In addition to the above two official visits, leaders of the two countries also held four meetings on the occasion of international meetings and communicated with each other on major issues of common concern.

On June 15, 2011, Chinese President Hu Jintao paid a state visit to Russia and attended the 15th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. This visit coincided with the 15th anniversary of the establishment of a strategic partnership of cooperation between China and Russia and the 10th anniversary of the signing of the *Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship* and was therefore of special historical significance. On the next day, President Hu Jintao and President Medvedev held a meeting in the Kremlin. They comprehensively summarized the development of Sino-Russian relations over the past decade, and exchanged in-depth views on the development plan of bilateral relations in the next decade. After the talks, the two heads of state issued two important documents: *Joint Statement on the 10th Anniversary of Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship between Heads of State of China and Russia* and *Sino-Russian Joint Statement on the Current International Situation and Major International Issues*. In addition, the two heads of state also had informal meetings while attending BRIC Leaders Meeting and G20 Leaders’ Meeting.

In 2012, President Medvedev ended his term of office, and Putin won the election, becoming president of Russia for the third time. From June 5 to 7, Russian President Vladimir Putin paid a state visit to China within one month after his official appointment and attended the 12th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of Shanghai Cooperation Organization. President Hu Jintao held talks with President Putin and signed

Joint Statement on Further Deepening Equal Trust Regarding China-Russia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation. In the statement, the two sides recalled the development of Sino-Russian relations since the 21st century and would be committed to further strengthening friendly Sino-Russian comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership featured with equal trust, mutual support and common prosperity.

In general, during this period, Sino-Russian summit diplomacy was consolidated and improved, with the mechanism of formal visits and informal meetings established. The two countries fully communicated and exchanged ideas on important international events such as the development of Sino-Russian cooperation, financial crisis, international anti-terrorism and nuclear issue. All these signs show that Sino-Russian diplomatic mechanism is developing and maturing.

Enhancement and Promotion of Sino-Russian Summit Diplomacy

Since the fifth generation of leadership came to power in 2012, meetings between heads of China and Russia has been more frequent and Sino-Russian relations has further developed. During this period, due to constant changes in international situation, the United States implemented “Asia-Pacific rebalancing strategy” to curb the development of China. Russia was also sanctioned by the western world due to Ukrainian crisis. Common situation and pressure has made relations between the two countries closer, with more frequent visits by the two heads of state. Between 2013 and 2017, heads of the two countries met more than 20 times, with both the quantity and quality of their communication improved.

In March, 2013, Xi Jinping visited Russia not long after his inauguration, which reflected that Chinese president attached great importance to Sino-Russian relations. On March 22, Xi Jinping arrived in Moscow and held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin. Putin warmly welcomed Xi Jinping and believed that Xi's choosing Russia as the first stop of his foreign visit showed the two sides thought much of the development of Russia. Xi Jinping stressed that China and Russia are the most important and major strategic cooperative partners, and that deepening comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership between Chi-

na and Russia should occupy a strategic position in both the diplomatic and external relations of the two countries, with which Putin fully agreed. After the talks, the two heads of state signed *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Win-win Cooperation and Deepening Overall Strategic Partnership* and a series of agreements on energy cooperation, financial investment, infrastructure construction and local cooperation. Russia's major media made full reports on China's new leader's visiting Russia for the first time. *Kommersant* commented that "Chinese President Xi Jinping gives people the impression of being energetic". It disclosed a detail, "During the talks, President Xi said after recalling his interpersonal process with with Putin: You and I am very much alike in character. Hearing this, Putin laughed happily" [6]. Xi Jinping was born in June, 1953, while Putin was born in October, 1952. The two peers do have a lot in common. In 2013, heads of state of China and Russia also held four informal meetings. They were held during the 5th BRICS Summit on March 27 in Durban, South Africa; G20 Leaders' Summit on September 5 in St. Petersburg, Russia; Shanghai Cooperation Organization Leaders' Summit on September 13 in Bishkek; and APEC Leaders' Summit on October 7 in Bali. The summit in Bali coincided with Putin's 61st birthday. President Xi presented a birthday cake to him, expressing a harmonious friendship between the two heads of state. The friendship is important for the development of the summit diplomacy and relations between the two countries.

In November, 2013, the Ukrainian crisis broke out and the relationship between Russia and the western world became tense. In this case, President Xi Jinping made a special trip to participate in the Sochi Winter Olympics on February 6, 2014 and hereby express China's support for Russia. According to Xi Jinping, the Sochi Winter Olympics coincided with the Chinese New Year. China and Russia are good neighbors, good partners and good friends. In accordance with Chinese tradition, Xi certainly wants to make a special trip to congratulate its neighbor on hold such a big event and share joy with Russian people. As for this move, Putin expressed his heartfelt thanks and warm welcome to Xi Jinping. In friendly and pragmatic atmosphere, the two leaders comprehensively summed up the development and important results of Sino-Russian

relations in the past year, made strategic planning and deployment on cooperation between the two countries in the new year, and exchanged views and reached consensuses on major events of common concern, such as One Belt One Road strategy, Sino-Russian economy and trade, energy cooperation, the Syrian issue, and the Ukrainian crisis. On May 20, President Putin visited China and attended Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia held in Shanghai, and was warmly welcomed by President Xi Jinping. The two sides exchanged views on the Ukrainian crisis, economic and trade cooperation, energy issues, military exercise, and the celebration of anti-fascist victory in 2015. On the next day, the two governments signed a memorandum of “China-Russia East Rail Gas Cooperation” and *Sino-Russian East Line of Gas Purchase and Supply Contract*. The total value of the contract was \$400 billion. The signing of this contract not only enhanced energy cooperation between China and Russia, but also eased the pressure caused by the Ukraine crisis against Russia. “Sino-Russian gas cooperation program has delivered a clear signal that China has replaced the West in terms of their significance to Russia”, commented Andrei Kirksinger, director of Department of Politics at the Moscow State University” [7].

In 2014, heads of the two countries held three meetings taking the opportunity of participating in various international conferences. On July 14, President Xi Jinping attended the 6th BRICS Leaders’ Meeting in Brazil, during which he met with Putin, hoping that “both sides can strike while the iron is hot and faithfully fulfill our consensuses”. Putin said Russia was willing to work with China to implement the important agreements signed before as scheduled. On September 11, Xi Jinping met with Putin in the capital of Tajikistan, Dushanbe. On November 9, Xi Jinping met with Putin at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse while Putin attended the 22nd APEC Leaders’ Informal Meeting. Putin presented Xi Jinping a Russian-made smart phone YotaPhone 2 to express his thanks for his birthday cake.

The year of 2015 was the 70th anniversary of the victory of the world anti-Fascist war. From May 8–10, Xi Jinping went to Russia to attend celebrations of the 70th anniversary celebration of the Great Patriotic War at the invitation of Putin. On May 8, Putin held talks with Xi Jinping in the Kremlin. The two leaders agreed that the two countries should jointly

safeguard the victories of the Second World War and international fairness and justice. In addition, the two sides exchanged views on international and regional issues such as the construction of the Silk Road economic zone, the situation on the Korean peninsula and the Iran nuclear issue. On the same day, Xi Jinping also met with representatives of 18 Russian veterans who had fought against Japanese invaders in China and representatives of Russian experts and relatives having aided China. On May 9, Xi Jinping participated a grand military parade in the Red Square and enjoyed the fireworks show. During this visit, the two sides also signed a series of other agreements, covering conditions of west line gas supply and Moscow-Kazan high-speed rail financing. On September 3, Putin paid a return visit to China and attended the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese War of Resistance Against Japan and met with Xi Jinping. Xi Jinping thanked Russia for its active support for China. According to Xi, China and Russia, as the main battlefield of the Second World War in Asia and Europe respectively, sacrificed the most and made great contributions. This year, leaders of the two countries attended each other's commemorative activities, the purpose of which is to promote regional and world peace and inject positive energy into the cause of human peace and progress. Putin said he was delighted to attend China's commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the victory of the Chinese War of Resistance Against Japan. The commemorative meeting and parade were impressive and Russia highly praises clear and powerful information on peace delivered by President Xi Jinping. After the meeting, the two sides signed a series of agreements on economy, energy, science and technology, culture and education, infrastructure and regional cooperation.

In addition to two official visits, the two heads of state also held three informal meetings in 2015. On July 8, Xi Jinping met with Putin during the BRICS Leaders' Meeting held in Ufa, Russia. On November 15, Xi Jinping held a meeting with Putin during G20 Leaders' Summit held in Antalya, Turkey. The two leaders mainly discussed the docking of major strategies between China and Russia. On November 30, Xi Jinping met with Putin at Paris Climate Conference. The two heads of state focused on major international issues of concern to both sides, especially international counter-terrorism.

In 2016, Sino-Russian summit diplomacy maintained positive development. On June 25, Putin visited China and held talks with Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People. The two leaders agreed to adhere to strategic cooperation and friendship across generations, increase mutual support, enhance political and strategic mutual trust, and firmly devote themselves to deepening China-Russia comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership. Xi Jinping pointed out that 2016 was the 15th anniversary of the signing of *Sino-Russian Treaty of Friendship* and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of China-Russia strategic partnership of cooperation. The two major strategic decisions made by both sides are in line with the fundamental interests of both countries and the development trend of the times as well. The two sides need to support each other on the core interests of each other, and constantly consolidate and deepen political and strategic mutual trust. According to Putin, as a strategic partner of China, Russia is willing to understand and support China's core interests and major concerns and vice versa. Russia and China share similar standing in dealing with international affairs. It is necessary for both sides to maintain close communication and coordination. After the talks, the two leaders signed 3 joint statements and more than 30 cooperation documents in the fields of economy, trade, diplomacy, finance, energy and media. In addition, in 2016 the two heads of state also held talks during Hangzhou G20 summit, APEC meeting, etc., and exchanged views on international issues of common concern and bilateral relations in a timely manner.

In 2017, the heads of state of China and Russia continued to maintain mutual trust and had frequent exchanges. On July 3, President Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Russia and held talks with Putin, which was the 21st meeting between Xi Jinping and Putin. During the talks, President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to deepen China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of cooperation, and to build high-level and strong Sino-Russian relations as booster of promoting the development of the two countries and the ballast of world peace and stability. The Russian community highly praised this visit of President Xi Jinping, expressed high hopes for the future de-

velopment of Russia-China relations, and expressed appreciation for measures of the two countries in responding to threats to international security. After the talks, the two countries signed *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on the Current World Situation and Major International Issues*, and *Joint Statement of the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation on Further Deepening the Strategic Partnership*. In addition, the two heads of state also furthered communicate and enhanced relations between the two countries by taking advantage of attending One Belt One Road forum and BRICS Leaders' Meeting, etc.

On the whole, since the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the founding of Russia Federation, summit diplomacy mechanism between China and Russia has gradually matured, with increasingly frequent meetings, continuously improved political mutual trust and increasingly deep personal friendship, which promote the development of Sino-Russian relations. During the reign of the third generation of leadership with Jiang Zemin as the core, China and Russia resolved negative impacts on bilateral relations brought by the collapse of the Soviet Union, gradually established the mechanism of regular meetings between heads of state, and timely and effectively exchanged in-depth views on issues concerning the two countries and international affairs of common concern. During the reign of the fourth generation of leadership with Hu Jintao as the core, leaders of China and Russia gradually established a mechanism containing one formal state visit and three to five informal meetings every year. This combination of formal and informal meetings enables both Chinese and Russian leaders to hold regular state visits, resolve major issues, issue joint declarations, sign agreements, and use other international platforms to communicate with each other in a timely manner. It is favorable for deepening political mutual trust between the two heads of state and for the benign development of bilateral relations. Since the fifth generation of leadership with Xi Jinping as the core came to power, China and Russia have been suffering from containment from the West, which further enhanced the relationship between the two countries. During this period, the two heads of state met more frequently and cooperated closely and

supported each other in major international affairs. Sino-Russian summit diplomacy develops and matures in practice.

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